

REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

IMPERATIVE SURGERY, FOR THE GENERAL PRACTITIONER, THE SPECIALIST, AND THE RECENT GRADUATE. BY HOWARD LILIENTHAL, M.D. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1900.

This alarming title is attached to a modest, neatly gotten up volume of four hundred octavo pages, printed upon supercalendered paper and illustrated with many excellent and original pictures. The author says, "The practitioner of general medicine who rarely takes up the scalpel, the specialist whose path seldom leads him to the operating-room, and the recent graduate who, though versed in the lore of the books and lectures, has seen but little surgery at close range, are those for whom this work has been prepared. It deals only with the diagnosis and treatment of conditions which demand immediate operative measures; and it presupposes the absence of an experienced surgeon and the impossibility or inexpediency of removing the patient or of waiting for expert assistance."

The effort of the author, therefore, is to tell a tyro what to do when he stands in the presence of a grave surgical emergency,—how to extemporize retractors out of table-spoons, eating-forks, and hair-pins; and how to introduce into his armamentarium potato-cutters, gas-pliers, carpenters' saws, butchers' saws, scroll-saws, pocket-knives, and darning-needles. He begins by giving one the impression that he is writing a surgical guide for the use of mates of sailing vessels or for gang-bosses in lumber camps. There is a codicil to the author's preface which reads like the last will and testament of a benevolent old gentleman in ill health.

If the intention is to instruct those who are ignorant in surgery and who harbor an ambition to learn the subject, then the book fails in its purpose, for they should be taught the complete and perfect art. No imperfect surgery should be countenanced; no easy road to major surgery should be pointed out. If the intention is to instruct those who are ignorant in surgery, and who do not propose to learn the subject, but would use the book as a guide when an emergency arises, then it never should have been written, for its little knowledge will prove a dangerous thing. It will encourage amateur surgery; and if the surgery must be done, and will be done, it had better be taken from the ordinary text-book intended for the real surgeon and interlarded with the fundamental principles of the art. Moreover, it is too brief to be a safe rule and guide. The resources of its therapy are too limited. It passes too quickly from conservative and palliative measures to radical operation. The author would have his amateur lopping off legs and arms as though that were, indeed, the chief end of imperative surgery.

When we come to consider the value of this book, not for the inexperienced, for whom the author has intended it, but for the professed surgeon of some experience, we find that it has much to recommend it. The surgeon will find that it contains many valuable practical points and helpful expedients. The general surgical principles which it lays down are quite invariably sound; and the evidences of the author's mastery of the technique of surgery are seen on every page. It is of particular value for the hints which it contains, which will be of help to the surgeon when operating outside of the circle of complete operating-room facilities. It is eminently practical; and no surgeon can read it without obtaining instruction. It is founded on good surgery.

The author does progressive surgery a service in pointing out and insisting that many of the major operations can be done under local anesthesia. Concerning gastrotomy for cesophageal

obstruction, the author makes the very practical statement that local anesthesia is indicated because of the additional danger of the inhalation, of the excess of mucus excited by chloroform or ether, which, because of the obstruction, cannot be swallowed.

The illustrations are excellent. The index is complete; and the whole is a handsome example of book-making.

NEWTON JAMES.

LA SUTURE INTESTINALE. Histoire des Différents Procédés d'Entérorraphie. Par FELIX TERRIER, Professeur de Médecine Opératoire à la Faculté de Médecine, etc., et MARCEL BAUDOUIN, Préparateur du Cours de Médecine Opératoire à la Faculté, etc. Paris: Institut de Bibliographie Scientifique, 1898.

Under title of Intestinal Suture, Messieurs Terrier and Baudouin have prepared a volume of 415 pages of a somewhat novel, very interesting, and peculiarly valuable sort. Restricting their researches as the title indicates, they have with infinite labor gotten together a very large number of monographs, pamphlets, magazine, and text-book articles, complete so far as possible up to September, 1898, and going back to the scanty medical literature of the early Sanscrit. Reducing this mass to order, they have developed chronologically the growth of attempts at repairing intestinal wounds from the primitive efforts of the early Indian and Arabian surgeons, who persuaded large black ants to close the wound with their powerful mandibles, and rewarded their efforts by tweaking off their bodies, so as to prevent a change of mind; through the successive employment of waxed silk left long and unknotted, so as to be withdrawn through the abdominal opening; of the artificial anus; of buried sutures; of unaided anastomosis; up to the epoch of mechanical approximation contrivances of which Murphy's button stands as the type. It is not the purpose of this brief notice to review or to criticise in detail the work under consideration, but rather to record its